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SUBJECT: INDIAN EXPECTATIONS FOR THE PAC-2 BRIEFING

Classified By: DCM Robert O. Blake, Jr., for Reasons 1.4 (B, D)

1. (C) The classified briefing on the Patriot PAC-2 missile defense (MD) system, currently scheduled for February 22 or 23, has generated a great deal of interest within the Indian government, with senior GOI officials hopeful that this will be the beginning of a broader MD relationship with the US. GOI officials who are expected to attend the briefing include MEA A/S Meera Shankar, MOD J/S Gautam Mukhopadhyaya, as well as senior Army, Air Force, DRDO, and Acquisition reps. We have also heard expressions of interest from the PMO -- although NSA Narayanan, unlike his predecessor Mani Dixit, has not yet pronounced himself in favor of the US-India MD relationship. As the GOI is only in the initial stages of formulating its missile defense doctrine, government and military representatives at the meeting may raise policy questions about MD beyond the scope of the technical capabilities of the PAC-2. Post welcomes the participation of senior USG officials who might be able to address such policy questions should they arise.

2. (C) This PAC-2 briefing comes in the context of an underdeveloped military sales relationship that we are now seeking seriously to energize. Getting a long sought-after breakthrough military sale -- whether a Patriot or any other major platform -- will be an uphill campaign. In a recent interview in New Delhi's "National Review," Defense Minister Mukherjee summarized some of India's complaints about military procurements from the US, "We have problems buying arms from you because your laws are very strict. At any point you may have to clamp sanctions on us." In this context, we can not afford to be ambivalent in the message we send on the PAC-2 system, since any sign of US wavering will be seized on by those who remain skeptical of US reliability. Key in this regard will be the US message that the PAC-2 offer is a step toward PAC-3, which is what India ultimately hopes to purchase.

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